

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Notes of the Month.

OUR first word shall be one of hearty greeting and good wishes to all our readers. May the New Year be for them one of unalloyed happiness and prosperity, of steady progress in the things of the spirit. Let no serious discouragement damp their ardour in pursuit of the best and highest they know or can conceive. And, for ourselves, we pray that we may be permitted to present with greater power and more potent appeal the noblest and most unselfish ideals of which our common faith can tell.

The New Year will soon bring us a united task and a great opportunity. Upon us will rest the responsibility of discharging the one and of seizing the other. The decision to hold a United Service and Meeting to inaugurate the

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland will be carried into effect during this month of January, and all our congregations will duly know the details. We would urge all who have the interests of our cause at heart to make up their minds that what personal devotion and enthusiasm can do shall be done. The scheme of re-organisation has received the hearty approval of all the constituent congregations and will be issued in its final form at an early date. But that alone is not sufficient. No scheme, however comprehensive and well-devised, can effect what we desire and need. That only strong, unwearying, and unselfish action can do. Let us commend one good resolution to all our readers for the year 1910, *viz.*, the solemn resolution to make every sacrifice on behalf of the new Church. The scheme which now binds us together is the natural consummation of the efforts of men and women who made brave and ready response to the call of duty, and who thought no price too great to be paid for the safe preservation of principle. In accepting and carrying on the latter it behoves us to receive also the thought of our own responsibility for its maintenance and propagation. We can best show ourselves grateful for the past by being faithful guardians in the present and by becoming zealous and enthusiastic workers for a still more glorious future. If that spirit be ours we need not think of failure but may rest assured that in due time "we shall reap if we faint not."

No great organisation, however spiritual its aims, and elevated its purposes, can ignore practical things in an essentially practical age. One of the first steps to be taken in connection with our newly-constituted Church is the starting of a Sustentation Fund. Many of our congregations are languishing for want of adequate support. Their members, few in number and already giving to the utmost of their ability, cannot bear any greater financial burden. The ministers of such congregations are hampered in their work by the smallness of their stipends and the consequent anxiety which it engenders. The only way to meet the need is to create a strong central fund from which all would receive as their right. The effect of this would be to free many a minister from present financial embarrassment and to assist his members in a task which their unaided efforts are powerless to perform. Yet it must be made clear that the formation of such a central fund will demand not only the generous gifts of the wealthy few, but also the unselfish support of all. Only by a great united effort can our Church be properly equipped to do the work it is called upon to do.

We have pleasure in informing our readers that in connection with the Re-organisation of our Churches the important Congregations of All Souls', Moneyrea, and Mountpottinger, have been admitted, the first-named into the Antrim Presbytery, and the others into the Presbytery of Bangor. We also understand that Carrickfergus is now linked with the former Presbytery. This news will, we are sure, give genuine satisfaction to all friends and members of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. We congratulate the congregations on the step they have taken, and the Presbyteries on their fresh addition of strength; and we have no hesitation in predicting that the unions referred to will be productive of much good to all concerned. As time passes it will be proved in this connection that "union is strength." There is much

good work to be done by our Church at present, and it is a happy augury for our future usefulness that our congregations are now so closely banded together. Quietly and steadily we are preparing for what will, we trust, be a great day in our history, when the formal inauguration of our new Church, takes place in the First House, Rosemary Street, Belfast, of which due notice will of course be given to all concerned. Already a handsome donation has been promised to the new Sustentation Fund, and preliminary steps have been taken for the drawing up of Deed of Trust to govern said Fund. That the future of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland may be commensurate with its possibilities, let us earnestly commend its claims to the sympathy and support of its friends.

The Congregation of Stephen's Green Church, Dublin, has extended, and Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A., has accepted an unanimous invitation to succeed Rev. G. Hamilton Vance, B.D. Mr. Hicks, who is a native of Manchester, spent some years of his early life in Holywood, Co. Down, where he first imbibed his Unitarian views under the late Rev. C. J. M'Alester. He was educated at University College, Liverpool, and Jesus College, Oxford. After graduating in Oxford University, he entered Manchester College, Oxford, where he took a three years' course of study before entering upon his ministry. It is interesting to note that Unity Church, Islington, supplied the Irish Church with one of the greatest champions of Unitarianism, *viz.*, Rev. J. Scott Porter, and Mr. Hicks comes with the best credentials, as may be seen from the following article which we reprint from *The Christian Life* :—"In the approaching removal of Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A., from London to Dublin, Unity Church, Islington, will lose one of the brightest and most popular ministers it has ever had; while the London District Unitarian Society will have great difficulty in finding such another genial, energetic and practical secretary as he.

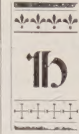
We have too few ministers of Mr. Hicks' stamp in London. He is universally loved, not only among the members of his own congregation, but by all who have come into contact with him. While we shall all be sorry to lose Mr. Hicks from London, we offer him our most cordial congratulations on having been called to a sphere of labour where he will have ample scope for the exercise of his gifts as a worker, a pastor, and a friend. We wish him and Mrs. Hicks and their young family every success and blessing in the new home to which they will be moving early in the New Year."

Father Bernard Vaughan, preaching before a crowded congregation at Farm Street Church, on Sunday, 12th December, said—Present-day education and present-day life did not contribute to building up strong Christian conduct. Life to-day was a sort of nightmare in which the citizen's chief concern seemed to be to cross arteries of the city without being run over. A hundred years ago 80 per cent. of our people lived in the country, while to-day more than 80 per cent. were huddled together in the towns without space wherein to live decent lives. "Come back to the land" was the cry that was beginning to be set up. "I am deeply grieved to say," said Father Vaughan, "that they will never persuade our people to return to the land till you can guarantee that attached to every great farm there is a music-hall with two performances nightly. We may try to blind ourselves to the fact—and it is a fact—that you can no more get the people of England to-day out of the theatre than you can get them into a church. The only room in our country at present is in the churches."

I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do any fellow human being, let me do it now; let me not defer it nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.—*Anon.*

"LETTERS AS LITERATURE."

By Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.



HOW strange it seems that the thoughts and feelings which find expression in a letter written by one friend to another on some special occasion long ago should be of interest to us living so many years after the two friends have passed away! Such letters were called forth by no great event, and they make no allusion to matters of unusual interest. And yet there is something in them which not only induced the receiver to treasure them up, but also impels many readers to-day to glance over them again and again. I take down from my shelves a large volume entitled "The Familiar Epistles of James Howell." I open it and find that it contains about four hundred letters, not one of which was written less than two hundred and fifty years ago. I learn that although all those letters were at first private letters yet they were published during the writer's lifetime, and have been offered to the public some twelve or thirteen times since, and on each occasion many lovers of books have been glad to buy and read those letters for themselves. Was James Howell, then, some important person? If so, no doubt the letters he wrote would serve to satisfy curiosity about him, and be preserved for biographical reasons. But no, he was not nearly so important as many who lived in his day. The interest in his letters cannot be accounted for in that way. Nor is it because he was a great traveller and writes to his friends from many foreign places that they thought highly of him as a correspondent. No, many of his statements are misleading and inaccurate. It is not so much what he has to say but how he actually says it that makes his letters so interesting.

Just as there are people whose conversation is always attractive even when they tell no important news or describe no great event, so there are letter-writers who can make ordinary topics bright and attractive, can touch them with light and pleasing hand, can invest them

with a subtle charm that we cannot explain but do most certainly feel. A good letter is in fact the next best thing to good conversation—it is the simple, sincere, spontaneous outpouring of one's heart or mind to one's friend as one thinks only of him, and as put down on paper because time and place do not enable us to say in his presence all we should like to say. When written, such a letter is delivered to one person, and when the latter has read it its mission seems at an end. Soon its items of news will become stale; in any case its message is delivered and done with. But no! Just because of its felicity of expression, its pervasive charm, its pleasing revelation of attractive human qualities, it is destined for a wider audience and a more general appeal. The delighted receiver shows it to others, who share the pleasure which he felt. All are agreed that it must not be destroyed; all are eager to peruse the next letter from the same hand. Thus it comes about that a collection of letters is formed, which, at the death of the writer, forms the most fitting and felicitous memorial his friends have to offer—giving back, as it were, to the world in the form of letters that which his friendship first offered to them. How rich is English literature in such collections! In the eighteenth century alone we have the letters of Dean Swift, Lord Bolingbroke, Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, The Earl of Chesterfield, Thomas Gray, Horace Walpole, and William Cowper. What hours of delight their names call up when they conversed just as freely and frankly with us as they did with their living friends. He who has not made the Grand Tour with Gray, seen men and affairs with Walpole, or participated in the simple country life of Cowper, has not known what it is to live as a student of friendly and informal literature. And in passing from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century who could desire a better guide, philosopher and friend than the lovable Charles Lamb, one of the most delightful of letter-writers? But Shelley, Byron, and Keats have also

a delightful and many-sided message for the receptive modern ear, now telling of new and stirring scenes, now discoursing of themes made vivid by the touch of genius and left permanently interesting by the power of unconscious literary art. And if one desires to make acquaintance with some of the great personalities of the last century what better medium could be had than the letters of Mrs. Carlyle, Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Louis Stevenson? There in one mingles on terms of pleasant equality with Mazzini, Father Mathew, Thomas Carlyle, Alfred and Frederick Tennyson, Thackeray, and many others. Yet delightful as it is to hear of them the all-important thing is the medium which reveals them, the literary art which seizes upon the salient factors and clothes these with simple and graceful charm. Because such letters as are already mentioned do this they live, and will long continue to live, as literature.

THE TRUE MEANING OF "NON-SUBSCRIBING."

By Rev. W. E. Mellone.

WE are all of us aware of the easy way in which words and phrases continue in use after their special signification is little thought of, or has almost become obsolete, and they have been debased into catch-words. Even where such is not the case names and terms may be so varied in their uses and applications that what are intended as definitions become indefinite, meaning one thing to some and another thing to different people.

Take, for instance, the designation of "Non-Subscribers;" many persons, especially in the North of Ireland, imagine that it refers only to Unitarians and other religious societies who are unorthodox. There are even some who think it has to do with gifts of money to a church or charity. There is a humorous story of two men who on a railway journey were reading their newspapers; one looked up and said to the other: "Who are these 'Non-Subscribers' mentioned here?" "I do not know exactly," was the reply, "but I am sure we have too many non-subscribers at our church." He was perhaps the treasurer and spoke feelingly.

People who are interested in the history of churches—which after all are among the greatest institutions in the world—and others who like to be clear as to what an opinion,

or a practice, is and is not, will find it worth their while to enquire—as far as possible without bias or prejudice—into the true meaning of “ Non-Subscription.”

It is true that Unitarians are Non-Subscribers on principle. Whatever else they may differ about, they are agreed in refusing “ assent and consent ” to a creed of any sort. They require no pledge of doctrinal belief, either from their members or ministers. They do not think it necessary, or even fitting to “ rehearse the articles of their belief ” as a part of the worship of the Almighty and All-seeing One. It would be a great mistake, however, to take this as implying that they have no “ creed ” in the sense of “ things most surely believed.” But they resist and reject every and any attempt to compose those beliefs into a system of theology, or a summary of tenets, agreement with which is imperatively required ; or which is even proposed for acceptance as representing the faith of all.

But the question of Subscription, that is, of a declared acceptance of a dogma, or system of dogmas, is a very ancient one. At least it may be traced as far back as the beginning or thereabouts of the fourth century of our era, when the famous controversy broke out between the patriarch, Bishop Alexander, and the heresiarch, Arius, then a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria. There was a dispute between the bishop and the presbyter about which was the true Christian doctrine of the relation between the Father and the Son. Alexander insisted that the only true belief is that Jesus was co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and His Son by eternal generation. Arius denied this, and affirmed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by creation, and is God only in a subordinate sense. The bishop, in order to settle the question, convened a Synod of bishops at Alexandria. If at this council Arius had recanted his heresy and declared his assent to what was held to be the orthodox dogma, this would not have ended his doctrine, but he himself would have seen opening before him a very different career from that which fell to his lot. But he refused to—as we should say—subscribe to what he did not believe, was excommunicated and banished. This is not the place to narrate the subsequent history of his doctrine, but it is necessary for the purpose of this article to cite the well-known facts.

Arianism spread rapidly, especially in the East. And when at length the question was brought to an issue, in the great Council of Nicea, and the Nicæan Creed was formulated as the authoritative doctrine, there were Non-Subscribers in considerable numbers ; and in the churches, or congregations, the controversy, so far from ceasing, grew and increased ; and for a long time it was doubtful whether anti-trinitarianism or the doctrine of the Nicæan Creed would prevail and

constitute the orthodoxy of the Christian Church.

But, to come down to modern times, what was the “ glorious secession ” of two thousand clergymen from the Established Church in England but a protest against enforced subscription ? The “ Act of Uniformity ” required that every clergyman should declare publicly his “ assent and consent ” to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer. This included, of course, the “ Articles of Religion ” which to all intents and purposes are one long creed. It was not a question of whether they really did believe the Articles but of whether they should be compelled formally to accept them as binding on their consciences. To their everlasting honour, they refused and so were driven out of the Church and, as far as possible, silenced and proscribed. Many of them no doubt held the same view of creeds as did the famous Richard Baxter : “ Two things,” he said, “ have been the plagues of the Church for above a thousand years—1. Enlarging our creed by making more fundamentals than God ever made. 2. Composing and so *imposing* our creed in our own words and phrases.”

And it was just this kind of “ imposition ” that the Non-Subscribers in Ireland from the beginning refused to submit to. Whether the assumed authority was that of the King and Parliament, or that of a General Synod, does not in the smallest degree affect the principle involved. It is the attempt to decide what is true by the vote of the majority and to make that decision to be the authoritative rule of faith, which constitutes the error and injustice of enforced subscription. At the time when the question was agitating the Presbyterian Churches of Ireland, now nearly two hundred years ago, there were men of wisdom and piety, both laymen and ministers, who, while being themselves orthodox, were opposed to subscription unless it were allowed to be purely voluntary. They doubted whether an assembly of ministers and elders dependent on the votes of their congregations for their appointment to office and for whatever jurisdiction they possessed—and whose decisions might be abrogated, or changed, at any time by their successors—had any right or moral justification for virtually saying to their brethren : “ You must and shall believe as we do, or go out from us.” They were more than doubtful as to the feasibility of making people orthodox by resolutions of Synod.

For example, the Rev. Patrick Simpson, of Dundalk, seceded from the Synod and “ cast in his lot with the Non-Subscribers,” not because he held with them entirely on doctrinal grounds, but as a protest against the spirit and methods of the dominant majority. And at length the question was brought to an issue in the meeting of the Ulster General Synod at Dungannon, in 1727, when after futile attempts at compromise by

mutual concessions, a resolution which meant compulsory subscription was carried there was a strong minority opposed to it; and the majority consisted mainly of lay-elders. There were nearly as many clergymen who voted against as there were who voted for subscription. The lay-elders were no doubt estimable and sincere men, as well as strong believers, who really thought that they were contending for the true faith and the honour of the Lord Jesus. But probably not one of them had ever investigated the difficult doctrinal questions which were at the bottom of the controversy. The main question, however, was not whether this or that doctrine was true or erroneous, but should a declaration of assent to the conventional creed be made compulsory. If the majority had carried the adoption of a moderately orthodox creed, or even an Arian confession, that is, if such a thing could have happened, the Non-Subscribers would have been opposed to it.

(To be concluded.)

SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

Recorded by Rev. W. S. Smith.

[*Note.*—Hezekiah Goodenough was a short slender man, well advanced in years. His face was deeply furrowed, weather-beaten, and judging by its stubbly appearance was seldom "shaved," excepting with scissors. And his hair was not often combed, but when it was, it was combed straight down from the crown all round, and usually left in that singular condition. He also had a habit of awkwardly tying his neck-cloth, of raising one side of his waistcoat above the other and slipping the buttons into the wrong button-holes, and of loosely fastening his big, heavy boots, which gave him an untidy appearance.

Mr. Goodenough was a farmer with many acres to cultivate, and only a small capital to draw upon. But though he had to bear with much anxiety, not known perhaps to his neighbours, he could at times be cheery, chatty, and even tuneful. He loved a fiddle. He took interest in current events, and liked to get the latest news respecting them. As he lived a good distance from a town, he did not often see a newspaper, but he made good use of any he fell in with. But above all, Hezekiah was a theologian, and liked a little friendly controversy. He was greatly interested in the revision of the Scriptures, and was so convinced of the truthfulness of Unitarian doctrines, as to believe, that if the revisers only did their duty, the New Version when it appeared could be no other than a Unitarian Version. In conversation he approached theological questions in a very straightforward, not to say blunt, manner; while his feelings and convictions were so blended that it was almost impossible for him not to be at once understood. Further,

Hezekiah Goodenough was great at meditating aloud—soliloquising. As he paced the lanes and fields he was often heard in earnest conversation, though no second person was present. Altogether, Mr. Goodenough was a man the like of whom one does not meet with every day.]

AM I NATURALLY DEPRAVED?

ERE I am at home instead of being at Meeting, as all decent folks should be. But, bad habits, like weeds, grow apace.

This staying at home on Sundays is a bad habit, I know. But it allows me, when all is quiet, to cogitate a little. I am apt to get into a "brown study" now and again, and out of confusion, to bring order if I can, at least to put my own thoughts about things, in order. I have been haunted with thoughts about natural depravity lately, and a queer subject it is certainly.

I don't think this notion of the curse of Adam is at all a decent one. Here am I, a grey-haired old fellow, trying to walk straight, interfering with nobody, and doing a good turn when I can, and yet, according to this doctrine, I am "made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." This is what "The Confession of Faith" says about me. What a fine certificate of character for any one to have! I wonder who would employ a man who carried such a recommendation about with him when looking for work. Would a decent professing Christian look with favour upon such a testimonial? I do not see how such a description can help a poor plodding fellow along the highway of life. No; I don't think this curse can be a decent sort of business at all, at all. But worse still! They tell me God not only created me black morally, but that I am responsible for this badness; and that unless certain possibilities are realised, I shall, as a consequence, be punished in hell for ever and ever. Mercy! Punish me for being, and doing, what I cannot help! Create me in sin; make it impossible for me to do other than sin, and then send me to hell for sinning! I think this a dreadful, unjust, unfatherly doctrine; one that is degrading to man, and dishonourable to God. I would not do such a thing with my children. No indeed! To infect a poor mortal with leprosy, and then curse him because he is infected, and say it is the act of God—away with such raving! Yet this is a necessary doctrine, according to the authorised plan of salvation! Ah, me! I think I could have arranged matters on a better footing than this. This has all come about through Eve allowing herself to be beguiled by that wily old reptile in the Garden of Eden, whereby she fell herself, and then caused Adam to fall also, thus bringing about the fall of everybody born since. A pretty mess they made of that garden. We are now suffering for the dust they kicked up. I don't think I can believe all this. It is enough to make one's hair grow

the wrong way up. This, a wise and benevolent arrangement by a wise and all-knowing, all-merciful Father! Goodness, gracious! Either the theologians were in a muddle when they settled this, or I shall soon be in a terrible one, from which not a hundred professors could extricate me. It is indeed a strange doctrine. I was not in the Garden of Eden when this thing occurred. I did not know anything about that dirty reptile who had his lodgings in a hole in one of the corners there. I never heard a serpent talk and so know nothing of his oily tongue. Although I try to grow fruit, I don't know what sort of a tree it was whose fruit was forbidden. Then, all these things took place thousands of years ago, long, long before I was born; and yet, because of them, I am in danger of being roasted in hell-fire for ever! If this is not crazy theology, then Hezekiah Goodenough does not know what craziness is. This is a wooden notion surely, and asserted in the face of the record that God made man in His own "image," and "upright," and in that of Jesus about the little folk, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Dear, dear, dear! what is the world coming to? I fear we are all on the way to Bedlam, and are being led there by the great professors. But if this is all true, is it not surprising that God should have been outwitted by the devil, who spoiled the Almighty's work which he had pronounced "very good"? This is one of the queerest notions out, and could not be beaten by any heathen nation from China to Peru. According to this, the devil is more powerful than the Almighty. At least, he got his own way when he ought not, and frustrated the plans of the Creator. It is, I say, a queer business.

We sometimes praise and glorify such men as King Alfred, Sir Isaac Newton, John Bunyan, Dr. Johnson, President Lincoln, and others. It is all a mistake, for they were only the devil's foster-children—they were all naturally depraved, loved darkness better than light, were "vile, conceived in sin," and "born unholy and unclean," as an old hymn says. Not very complimentary, eminent though they were. We are all imps of the devil—bad luck to us. I have come to the conclusion that the whole scheme as propounded by the bishops, and also the divines at Westminster, ages ago, is an audacious libel upon the wisdom, justice and love of God our Heavenly Father. If we charged our fellow-men with what we charge God, we should be accused of defamation of character. If all who are descended from Adam and Eve are under a curse from no cause of their own, but because of the sin of Adam and Eve, then I must respectfully decline to acknowledge myself as one of their descendants.

But here are the young folk from Meeting. Well, what was the minister's text? It was, said Robert, "For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of

God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day" (Psalm xlii. 4). "Humph," murmured Mr. Goodenough, "I wonder whether he was thinking of me."

NOTES OF THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE, DOWNPATRICK

(Concluded.)

BY REV. M. S. DUNBAR, M.A.

After an interval of about three years, James, the son of Dr. Moses Nelson, Minister of Rademon, was appointed pastor of the Congregation. He was a young man of high attainments in classics and science, and, like his father, engaged in teaching during his ministry. He lived in the corner house at the junction of Saul Street with Scotch Street, and there kept a classical academy in which scholars of all denominations were educated, some of whom afterwards attained considerable distinction. He died in the 70th year of his age and 47th of his ministry. The following is an extract from the obituary notice in the *Bible Christian* for April, 1830: "He was highly distinguished as a divine and as a scholar of the first order; and his Alma Mater, Glasgow College, conferred upon him the unsolicited honour of D.D. on account of his critical and accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in their original tongues. He was truly a man void of guile, and almost modest to a fault. To all he set the example of charity of judgment and good-will to men."

Yet, again, in the history of the Congregation, the father was succeeded by his son, who had been installed as assistant and successor three years before.

Samuel Craig Nelson, M.A., had been minister at Dromore for ten years before coming to his native town to assist his father. He had been educated at Glasgow like most of the Irish Presbyterian ministers of that time, where he competed successfully in Mathematics with Dr. Candlish, the future well-known leader in the Free Church of Scotland. He had also for a contemporary amongst others, Dr. Cooke, who became the famous champion of subscription in the North of Ireland in the renewed controversy on that subject, which led to the formation of the Remonstrant body in 1830, and with whom, in spite of their divergencies of opinion, he continued ever afterwards to be on good terms. Mr. Nelson during his college career also studied medicine, and afterwards added this to his good works, that he freely gave to his people and others the benefit of his knowledge. In its notice of his death, the *Down Recorder* of Saturday, January 31st, 1891, said:—"Mr. Nelson was evangelical in his discourses, and his prayers were full of devotion and deep reverence. But he was the intrepid champion of civil and religious liberty

in the fullest and broadest sense of the word, and refused to deny to others the full liberty of private judgment which he claimed for himself. He heartily supported the movement to start a reading room in the town. For several years he was Chairman of the Town Commissioners." In his time the Congregation was a large one, and an addition had to be made to the Meeting-house. But soon came the potato blight, which drove out of this one Congregation no less than 80 families. After a ministry of almost unprecedented length—56 years, including the period while he was assisting and that in which he was assisted—Mr. Nelson died in his 91st year, leaving reverent and tender memories in many homes in Lecale.

On the death of Mr. Nelson, the Rev. David Gordon, who had been appointed assistant and successor in 1871, became sole minister, but died shortly afterwards, in 1893. The Rev. W. Napier preached his funeral sermon, in which he said:—"Mr. Gordon was not merely the pastor, but the friend of his people, sympathising with them in all their varied experiences. Nor was he the friend of his own people only. Those of all sects and parties within the wide circle of his pastorate will lament his death and bear testimony to the kindness of his heart, the charitableness of his disposition, the breadth of his sympathies, and his genial nature. He conducted for many years a weekly literary class for the benefit of the young people. He occasionally contributed to *Chambers' Journal*, and wrote on a variety of subjects. He was an enthusiastic member of the Society of Antiquaries."

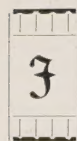
The present minister is the Rev. Michael S. Dunbar, M.A., who was installed on Thursday, 5th April, 1894.

We desire to acknowledge our indebtedness to Mr. Parkinson and to the Editor of the *Down Recorder* for the materials from which this brief account of our Meeting-house has been taken.

For the Children.

HONESTY.

By a Sunday School Teacher.



PROPOSE to address a few words to you to-day on the subject of Honesty. I shall not say anything about its policy. Honesty is a virtue worth cultivating for its own sake, altogether apart from policy, though there is no doubt but that when practised in early life, it leaves its mark for good upon the more matured character. This

could not be otherwise, because the word means when applied to human beings reputation, character, credit; and when applied to things it means beauty and grace.

Well, one day, not so long ago, I was reading my paper and, whether it was the paper that was dull or the reader, I won't say, but I was just about to place the paper aside with the remark that after all Thoreau's notion of newspapers was not far wrong, when my eyes suddenly caught the last paragraph, and my attention was completely arrested.

But before I tell you about the paragraph let me ask, Do you know anything about Thoreau? No? Well, perhaps it is a little early yet for you to have made his acquaintance, but when you grow a little older and take to more serious but interesting reading, you have a great treat in store. Thoreau was born in Concord, New England, in the year 1817, and died there in the year 1862, aged 45. He was one of those remarkable persons who gathered about the "intellectual Round Table" over which Emerson came to bear sway as Arthur, and which numbered among others Alcott, Curtis, Hawthorne, and Margaret Fuller. Thoreau was not by any means least within this famous coterie, but he was nevertheless an odd kind of man in his way, and we read that on the 4th July, 1845, he withdrew from society and went to live all alone in a house built for himself at Walden Pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord. He went to live in the woods, as he himself says, "to front only the essential facts of life;" to discover if possible what is necessary in our civilisation and what unnecessary. It is a most interesting book, and I would advise you to read it as soon as you are able. You will easily get it—"Walden," by Thoreau.

All that about Thoreau is a digression and I must return to my newspaper paragraph. Thoreau came into my thoughts because I remembered that among other things, speaking of newspapers, he said, "I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a news-

paper." That was an odd thing to say, to be sure, and yet I am certain that speaking for himself, as he admittedly was doing at the time, it was a quite true statement. But to understand it properly you must know the man and read the book. I wonder what he would have thought about the little paragraph I read the other day? Here it is at last:—"A boy restored to the Burnley police on Saturday a bag containing £72 in cash and a cheque for £300, which he had found in the street." The money was returned safely to the rightful owner. There can be no doubt as to what Thoreau's opinion of that act would have been had it happened in his time. He might perhaps have said there was nothing new in it; that the same thing, or something like it, had occurred many a time before; that in that sense it was not therefore a bit of "memorable news." But even so, Thoreau would have found something in that boy's character to admire and respect. It is uplifting to think and believe that there are crowds of boys everywhere, straight manly little fellows, who would have done the same thing, but when we come face to face with the fact accomplished we cannot withhold our word of praise, nor fail to hold it up for emulation.

For, just think, what a tremendous temptation therein presented itself! The cheque for £300 we may dismiss from calculation as of no use to anyone except the person to whom it was made payable. But there remained £72 in cash! Whew! and Christmas was coming on! What a glorious time one could have! And—but, no—steady—that won't do—that's lying, cheating, stealing, swindling, defrauding; in short that's all that's bad and dishonourable; and we can imagine that boy, if the temptation presented itself, pulling himself together, stiffening up his resolution, and handing over the money just like the brave little man he was.

In bringing this incident before your notice, I do not mean to assume that that brave boy stands in a class all by

himself; not at all; let us believe that there are innumerable other boys who would have acted in precisely the same manner and thereby proved that they were made of the same real, sterling good stuff. But we read of this case in the paper, as having actually happened, and it does us all good to read a good thing or hear of one. It encourages the others to do likewise. And it really does matter what you do when the chance is presented to you of doing right or doing wrong. A great teacher, Matthew Arnold, said in one of his books that conduct tots up to three-fourths of any individual's life, which is a big proportion, leaving only one-fourth for everything else not conduct. This conduct, let me say, is of prime importance and demands strictest attention for it is the foundation upon which you will raise the superstructure of your life. Belief, according to Matthew Arnold, belongs to the odd fourth, but no one will on that account seek to minimise its importance. A truly and honestly held belief must necessarily affect conduct one way or the other and anything that affects conduct must be reckoned with. See that your belief is true so far as it can possibly be made true. Believe in God from the time you can believe in anything and keep on believing in Him and His goodness to the end. And for the rest see to the conduct. The life that now is matters greatly; do not think a thought you would not like Him to know about, nor speak a word you would not care for Him to hear, nor do an act upon which you cannot pray for His blessing.

And now I must draw my brief address to a close. No doubt you boys especially often think what you will be and do when you grow up to manhood. Perhaps some of you think you'd like to make lots of money. Well, the making, or more correctly speaking, the earning, of money is often a very innocent occupation indeed, and frequently keeps men out of worse mischief. But remember this: it is not millions the world is in need of, nor is the pursuit of money to such an extent as

that at all justifiable. No, it is good reliable men we want; men whose word is as good as their bond; men who will stand up always for the right, and who will be straight and honest in all their transactions. And it is out of small boys with grit in them, who would be ashamed to do a meanness of any kind, that the best sorts of men are eventually developed.

REPORTS.

Ballyhemlin: The Late Mr. James Rankin and the Late Mrs. Eliza Allen.—The Ballyhemlin Congregation has suffered severe loss recently by the death of two of their eldest and most respected members, *viz.*, Mr. James Rankin, of Rocklands, Kirkcubbin, and Mrs. Eliza Allen, of Nunquarter House, Kirkcubbin. Both most regularly attended their church and generously supported every activity connected with it. Mr. Rankin was a ruling elder and also hon. secretary of the congregation for the last thirty-five years. He was a splendid type of manhood and a thorough representative Unitarian Churchman. The summary of his religion could not be better described than in those ancient words, "To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." He was the son of John Rankin, M.D., of Kirkcubbin (one of the founders of the Ballyhemlin Congregation in 1833) and so was connected with the church he so nobly represented from early boyhood. He married about forty years ago Miss Jane M'Caw, eldest daughter of the Rev. John M'Caw, the beloved minister for many years of Killinchy, Co. Down. She proved a true helpmeet to him in every good work he undertook, but unfortunately predeceased him by some two years. Since her death Mr. Rankin's health gradually declined, and he passed peacefully away in his 80th year, on the 7th September last, to the great regret of his friends and of the whole neighbourhood.

Mrs. Eliza Allen died on the 27th October, at the ripe old age of 93 years. (A brief account of her, with picture, was given in our September Magazine, 1908.) Until within a few weeks of the end she persisted in regularly attending the church she loved from her early days. She was ever a tower of strength and a constant encouragement to all things having to do with the church. Wise in counsel, kindly in spirit, generous and tolerant, she won the trust and confidence of all around her. She was a splendid example of that noble type of character our Unitarian conception of Christianity is calculated to produce. Her end was peace, and her memory is blessed.

Larne: The Late Mrs. Hugh Nelson, Trafalgar Villa.—In the demise of this good woman on December 8th, her husband and children, relatives and many friends, have to

mourn the loss of one of nature's true gentlewomen. She was the incarnation of gentleness and good nature—a woman with whom it was impossible to associate any idea of severity or harshness of word or deed. It is safe to say that poverty never left her door unrelieved, and that without being often seen in the streets, still less heard, aid from her kind hands found its way into many a needy home. Interment was in Kilwaughter Cemetery on 10th December, Rev. J. Kennedy officiating amid signs of deepest sorrow on the part of her kith and kin, and regretful sympathy on the part of many neighbours and friends.

Newry: The Late Mrs. Hill.—The Newry Congregation has sustained a loss by the death of Mrs. Hill, of Derramore, who passed away very suddenly on Monday evening, November 29th, after a brief illness. The deceased lady was one of the oldest members of this congregation, and had reached the age of 85 years. Until recently she had been very regular in her attendance at the services. The funeral took place on Thursday, December 2nd, in the Old Meeting-house Green, and was largely attended, representatives of all creeds being present. The services, both in the home and at the graveside were conducted by the Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Downpatrick.—The Downpatrick Non-Subscribing Church Bazaar was held in the Assembly Hall on 15th, 16th and 17th December, and proved to be in every way a huge success. The Bazaar was the means adopted of celebrating an historic event—the 200th anniversary of the founding of the church in Stream Street; and the object of the Bazaar was to renovate the church, manse and schoolroom. The project was taken up with great enthusiasm, and we were especially glad to note the substantial support accorded by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Andrews, D.L., and Mr. James Davidson, both loyal members of our church, whose speeches we regret we have not space to reproduce. Captain Craig M.P., and Mrs. Craig officiated at the opening ceremony on the first day.

Holywood.—On Thursday, December 16th, a Cake Fair and Fancy Sale in connection with the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church was held in the Town Hall, Holywood. The Sale was opened at three o'clock by Mrs. Richard Patterson in the unavoidable absence of Mrs. James Campbell, the chair being taken by Mr. R. E. McLean, M.A. There was a very large attendance during the afternoon and evening including members of all the churches in the town, and many friends from Belfast and the district. Brisk business was carried on and a very substantial amount of money was made. Those in charge of the Sale desire to return their sincere thanks to all those who so generously helped to make it the great success it was.

Kilwaughter.—On a recent Friday evening a most successful entertainment in aid of the funds of the Agnew Memorial and Countess Balzani National School and teacher's residence was given in the Orange Hall, Kilwaughter, the brethren of the Order, with their usual sympathy with all good objects, concurring and assisting. Punctually at eight o'clock the proceedings commenced by an exhibition of limelight views illustrative of local scenery, incidents of Boer War, &c., by Mr. Samuel Bailie. Songs were contributed by two very youthful performers, the Misses Ward, of Belfast, whose sweet voices and distinct enunciation gratified all listeners, and gave promise of great success in the future. Mr. Molyneux, of Ballymena, was heard with much pleasure in two songs, his rich deep voice being evidently capable of filling a much larger building than Kilwaughter Hall. Mr. Samuel Magill gave an interesting sketch of former teachers in Kilwaughter School, and contributed a couple of comic readings as he alone can. It is in no way disparaging to anyone to say that the outstanding features of the evening were the items given by Mr. Bertie Laird. His delineations of the pawky, verdant, amorous Scotch laddies and other characters, whose wooings were a matter of interest to King Edward, were irresistibly comic and mirth-compelling. Not only youths and maidens of tender years, but grey-headed fathers and mothers, surrendered to his genius, and abandoned themselves to uncontrollable laughter. Mr. David Pinkerton, of Larne, afforded a rich treat by his selections on the gramophone. The duties of accompanist were skilfully and efficiently performed by Miss M'Ninch, Larne. The entertainment was due almost to the exclusive efforts of Mr. S. M. Bailie, who is to be congratulated on the unquestioned success of the undertaking. The hall was well filled with a happy and good-natured audience, who not only enjoyed the performance but were charmed with the wealth of plants and floral decorations with which the platform was adorned, through the kindness of Mr. Sands and Mr. Crawford, of Kilwaughter Castle, to whom the trustees of the school and the teachers feel much indebted, as they do to all who so kindly assisted, and no less to those who aided by subscriptions.

Mountpottinger.—On Friday, December 17th, a Sale of Work and Cake Fair was held in the Schoolroom. The school was decorated with paper festoons and holly. There was a good supply of cakes and work. The Sale was opened by Miss Davidson, of Marybrook. At the close a sum of about £35 had been realised.

On Monday, December 20th, a Lantern Lecture was given in the Schoolroom by the Minister, Rev. J. Worthington, on "A Tour in Scotland." Mr. Worthington showed a number of interesting slides of Edinburgh, Oban, the Trossachs and Alloway.

On Monday evening, December 13th, the Rev. G. L. Phelps gave an address in the Schoolroom on "George Bernard Shaw." Mr. Phelps dealt especially with "Major Barbara," one of Mr. Shaw's most interesting plays, and quoted some passages in appreciation of Mr. Shaw's character and ability from G. K. Chesterton's book on the modern dramatist and social reformer. The lecturer attributed Mr. Shaw's love of paradox to the fact of his being an Irishman; but this view was challenged in the course of a discussion, which at times tended to betray a keener interest in the present political contest than in G. B. Shaw.

Unity Guild.—The December meeting was held in Rosemary Hall, Elmwood Avenue, on the 15th of the month, when Mr. A. M. I. Cleland gave a Lantern Lecture entitled "How the A B C Grew." It is to be regretted that the attendance was not up to the average as the lecture proved most interesting. With the aid of a number of excellent slides, Mr. Cleland showed his hearers how the alphabet attained its present constitution by easy stages from sign language and Egyptian hieroglyphics. The January meeting is fixed for the 26th inst., when Rev. J. Worthington, B.A., will lecture in York Street Hall on "The English Lake District," with lantern illustrations. The Annual Soiree, which is enjoyed by the younger members, will take place on Wednesday, the 12th inst., in the Central Hall. Tickets, which are 2/6 each, may be had from the members of Committee.

Whether thy work be fine or coarse,
planting corn or writing epics, so only it
be honest work, done to thine own
approbation, it shall earn a reward to
the senses as well as to the thought;
no matter how often defeated, you are
born to victory. The reward of a thing
well done is to have done it.—*Emerson.*

How soon a smile of God can change the world
How we are made for happiness—how work
Grows play, adversity a winning fight.

—*Browning.*

Death.

MELLONE.—On Sunday morning, 19th December, at The Hermitage, Warrenpoint, Elizabeth A. Mellone, beloved wife of the Rev. W. E. Mellone, and mother of the Rev. Dr. Mellone, aged 79 years.

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